(b) the steps taken by the Central Government to rehabilitate the State Co-op. Banks of the North Eastern Region;

(c) the amount of funds allotted in the 9th Five Year Plan to rehabilitate the State Co-op. Banks of the Region; and

(d) the amount allotted on State-wise basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and, to the extent available, will be laid on the Table of the House.

Pending claims in GIC offices

3523. SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of pending documents/claims department-wise, company-wise, of the four subsidiary offices of General Insurance Corporation, as on 1st April, 1996 and 28th February, 1997;

(b) their percentage as compared to the financial years 1994-95, 1995-96, in the same manner as above;

(c) whether Government would consider making a provision in the policy bond that in case of delayed issuance of documents or settlement of claims, an interest of 18% p.a. will be paid on the premium charged on claim settled as the case may be; and

(d) whether Government would also consider making the recalcitrant employees answerable for delayed issuance of documents or payment of claims, with a view to improve the image of a service industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Generation of black money through invoice Manipulation

3524. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reports that nearly 50 per cent of the black money is generated in the country through invoice manipulations; and

(b) whether Government propose to set up some mechanism to check import/export prices in the prevailing international prices to minimise over-invoicing and under invoicing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) No authentic study has been conducted in this regard. However, some instances of invoice manipulations have come to the notice of the Income tax Department.

(b) The Government have at its disposal various means of monitoring the prevailing international import/export prices. 'Special Valuation Branches' also exist in the Custom Houses to detect invoice manipulations.

Rise in Import Duty

3525. SHRI SUSHIL BARONGPA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import duty on malt and grapes has been raised;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government are thinking of other horticultural/agricultural products to be included in raised-import-duty category?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) In the budget for the year 1997-98, import duty on malt and grapes has not been raised.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.